



HIDALGO COUNTY

Urban County Program

Discharge Policy

Effective: July 7, 2009

MISSION

The mission of this policy is to ensure commitment that all persons released from publicly funded institutions or systems of care are not released into homelessness.

The Urban County Program will work with area agencies to provide mechanisms to link homeless persons with as many mainstream resources as possible prior to discharge.

HUD DEFINITION OF HOMELESS PERSON

The term "homeless" or homeless individual or homeless person" includes:

1. An individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and
2. An individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is
 - a. a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill);
 - b. an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
 - c. a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

HUD DEFINITION OF CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

A "chronically homeless" person is defined as an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, OR has had at least four

episodes of homelessness in the past three years.

In order to be considered chronically homeless, a person must have been sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., living on the streets) and/or in an emergency homeless shelter. A disabling condition is defined as a diagnosable substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability including the co-occurrence of two or more of these conditions. A disabling condition limits an individual's ability to work or perform one or more activities of daily living.

HIDALGO COUNTY URBAN COUNTY PROGRAM'S ROLE

The Urban County Program will effectively administer the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), HOME Program, Emergency Shelter Grant Program (ESG), and Homeless Prevention & Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP). The Urban County Program will ensure that funding be appropriated to agencies in the community committed to providing shelter and social services as well as homeless prevention services to homeless persons and agencies committed to permanent housing activities.

Urban County will monitor the CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HPRP grant recipients to ensure compliance with individual programs and activities.

Urban County will identify and partner with agencies in the community who provide transitional and permanent housing, emergency shelters, and social services for homeless persons to access.

AGENCY ROLES

Urban County will ensure that agencies in the community who receive Urban County program funding and who work directly with homeless persons have an enforceable policy to prevent homelessness.

Urban County recipients will recognize that homeless persons face particular barriers to housing and access to resources, therefore the discharge planning process will begin as soon as possible after admission to agency or public facility.

Urban County recipients will conduct a social services needs assessment for homeless persons immediately following admission and again prior to discharge.

Urban County recipients will make every effort to provide transitional or permanent housing to homeless individuals and social services should continue to be provided.

If “temporary” shelter placement is unavoidable, agencies must document the reason for the placement. Active case management should focus on locating a suitable housing alternative as well as ensuring that the individual continues to receive appropriate services.

If a homeless individual exercises the right to refuse treatment and or aid with placement, Urban County recipients should document refusal. Documentation should include case management efforts.